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DD / S R E G I S T R Y

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25 APR 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Computer Aided Instruction

1. On Thursday, 21 April 1966, I attended a briefing about computer-assisted instruction given by Albert E. Hickey representing Entelek Incorporated of Newburyport, Massachusetts sponsored by the Office of Research and Development/DDS&T. Also present were:


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2. Mr. Hickey talked for about 35 or 40 minutes about some of the ways in which computer hardware is being used as an aid to instruction. The talk was almost exclusively oriented toward equipment and the slides he used depicted student-computer interaction via a cathode ray tube console, and a light pen. I felt the talk tended to create the impression that the state of the art in computer-assisted instruction techniques is such that all we need to do is call upon these people and they would deliver the solution to our instructional problems. It was only during the question and answer period that some of the realities of life began to emerge.

3. In response to direct questions, Mr. Hickey acknowledged that very little has been done with computer-assisted instruction in foreign languages. That which has been done, of course, teaches only reading at the most elementary level. It will be many years at least, and it may never be practical, to use computer-assisted instructional techniques for teaching spoken languages.

4. The system development work preparatory to writing computer programs permitting courses of instruction to be offered was also glossed over entirely during the presentation and again only in response to a direct question did Mr. Hickey offer the estimate that about 40 hours of system work and about 7 hours of programming time are necessary to prepare one hour of instruction. I suspect that even these estimates are highly optimistic.

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5. A further briefing and hardware demonstration is scheduled for next week in the Office of Computer Services which I plan to attend.



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Special Assistant to the  
Deputy Director for Support

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